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Stadium dedicated to fallen Airman

Attendees reflect on sacrifices made by all servicemembers

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

332nd AEW/PA

More than 150 servicemembers from Balad Air Base and Logistics Support Area Anaconda gathered at the base stadium Wednesday to remember a fallen comrade.

Base leaders officially renamed the stadium Holt Memorial Stadium, in honor of Airman 1st Class Antoine J. Holt, during the ceremony. Airman Holt was killed during a base attack earlier this year.

A plaque at the stadium's main entrance dedicates the facility to Airman Holt and all Airmen who have been killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Today and forever more," said Brig. Gen. Yves Fontaine, commander of the 1st Corps Support Command, who was the keynote speaker at the dedication, "this stadium will stand in tribute to Airman 1st Class Antoine Holt's sacrifice and the sacrifices of all members of our armed services who have stood on that line so that others can enjoy the taste of freedom."

Airman Holt was a member of the 603rd Air Control Squadron at Aviano Air Base, Italy. He was qualified as a



Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Robert Jensen

Army Brig. Gen. Yves Fontaine, commander of the 1st Corps Support Command, and Col. Blair E. Hansen, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander, read a plaque which dedicates the base stadium to Airman 1st Class Antoine J. Holt, who died in April.

combat mission ready interface control technician.

He deployed here in November 2003 and was a member of the 332nd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron. He died April 10 when a mortar round hit the tent where he was sleeping.

The Kennesaw, Ga., native was known as quiet, steady and

reflective. He was the kind of person who put others ahead of himself, according to those who knew him.

"A1C Holt was outstanding as an Airman and as a person," said Lt. Col. Lt. Kristen Dolan, Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center Detachment 3, who was Airman Holt's commander at Balad. "What

impressed me most about him is the way he took care of others.

"He instinctively put his squadron mates ahead of himself," she wrote via e-mail. "For example, he was a very talented basketball player, but often spent more time helping his fellow team members score than trying to make baskets himself."

Those in attendance thought of the dedication ceremony as a worthy tribute.

"It was pretty somber, but very fitting," said Senior Master Sgt. Virgil Horsley, 332nd EACS. "For our unit it's significant. We're a rather small career field and very much like a tight-knit family.

"It's a nice memorial and a good reminder of why we are here, and the sacrifice he has given," he continued.

The memorial stands as a tribute to those who knew him, how much he brought to the unit and how much he will be missed.

"The entire unit felt Antoine's loss very deeply, especially after we had been deployed together for so long," Colonel Dolan said. "It was a privilege to serve with him and I appreciate the fact that the leadership there has chosen to honor him."

Airman Holt is survived by his wife of two years, Patricia Gail Holt, and his daughter, Carmen, who is two years old.

Balad welcomes chairman's USO tour

John Elway, Leeann Tweeden, Robin Williams meet and greet troops

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen
332nd AEW/PA

Troops from Balad Air Base and Logistics Support Area Anaconda were treated to an early Christmas present Tuesday.

The United Service Organizations brought the Chairman's Holiday Tour to Balad Stadium. Gen. Richard B. Meyers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and tour host, greeted more than 2,000 troops in attendance, thanked them for their service and introduced the special guests.

"We're here to give you a nice break in the routine and to thank you for what you are doing," General Meyers said. "These folks with me could be anywhere on the planet today, but that they chose to be here today with you."

John Elway, Leeann Tweeden and Robin Williams headlined General Meyers' tour.

Leeann Tweeden, who is a co-host on Fox Sports Net's Best Damn Sports Show Period and model, was making her third trip to Iraq and sixth USO tour.

"We're here to bring little piece of home to you," Tweeden said. "My father served in the Air Force during Vietnam and I grew up in a household where I was very proud to be an American."

"I am proud and honored to come over here and bring you a little bit of entertainment and say thank you," she continued.

NFL legend and Super Bowl champion John Elway took the stage next. He recalled his thoughts when he was asked by the USO to come over for a tour of Iraq.

"I said to myself, 'what can I do for the troops?'" Elway said. "I can't sing, I can't dance, I'm not funny and I'm sure not pret-



John Elway autographs a football for Denver native Jeannie Helms, 379th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, during the Chairman's Holiday Tour Tuesday at Balad Stadium.

Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Marc Barnes

ty. But I can still chuck it, so get ready boys."

With that, Elway tossed about 50 autographed mini-footballs into the crowd, showing he still has his hall of fame arm.

Closing out the show was comedian and Oscar-nominated actor Robin Williams. He told jokes and brought a message from home with him.

"I'm here from Hollywood to thank you for what you are doing," Williams said. "Please be careful here, stay safe and have a Merry Christmas."

The group then signed autographs and posed for photos with the troops.

"A visit like this just makes it a bit better here," said Master Sgt. Jeannie Helms, 379th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, who is a Denver native and had hometown hero Elway sign a football for her. "The fact that they are willing to leave their families during the holidays like this is



USO tour veteran Leeann Tweeden performs for the troops.

just great."

"I loved it," said Tech. Sgt. Jude Harper, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "It's great that they come all the way over here to show their support for us."

"This was a total morale booster," said Army Sgt. Jolynn



Actor and comedian Robin Williams got a few laughs out of the attendees.

Gibson, 81st Brigade Combat Team. "The whole thing was great and Robin Williams was just hilarious."

The USO organizes numerous tours throughout the year. They are a charitable corporation providing morale, welfare and recreation services to troops throughout the world.

The chairman's tour took the entertainers to stops throughout the AOR.

Fuel management flight unveils new 200K bladder

Perks include longer life span, no leaks, capacity

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

332nd AEW/PA

The 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels management flight welcomed a new member last week. A very large member.

The flight introduced a brand new 200,000-gallon fuel bladder Dec. 11, the first of its kind at Balad. This new fuel bag brings quite a few benefits to the fuel operations team and the base.

"This is significant for many reasons," said Tech. Sgt. Ken Gaddis, who is the NCO-in charge of fuel operations for the 332nd ELRS. "First of all, our people benefit from less maintenance and the wing gets cargo and passengers moved."



Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Gaddis

Members of the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron fuel operations flight lay out a new 200,000-gallon fuel bladder Dec. 11.

According to Sergeant Gaddis, the new bladder has been pressure tested to 300 PSI before it left the factory. This allowed the manufacturer to repair any leaks before it arrived here.

Another advantage to the new fuel bag is its design.

"This bladder has rounded

corners," Sergeant Gaddis said. "That eliminates fuel leaks in the corners that are inherent to the 50K and 210K bladders currently in use."

Another advantage is the fact that this fuel bladder has a longer life expectancy.

"This new fuel bladder comes with a three-year use

life as opposed to the one year that comes with the 50K and 210K gallon bladders," Sergeant Gaddis said.

Maybe the biggest advantage with the new bladder is its capacity. Although it is technically smaller than the 210K bladder, it actually holds more fuel.

"Our current fuel bladders are restricted to 75 percent capacity," Sergeant Gaddis said. "The new fuel bladder can be filled to its capacity."

After installing the fuel bag it took about seven hours and 25 tanker trucks, which hold about 8,000 gallons a piece, to fill it up. However, the fuels management flight is now reaping its benefits, one of which is saving time.

"The time it takes to repair fuel bladders or replacing them can be better utilized enhancing our facilities, not just maintaining them," Sergeant Gaddis said.

Hooah Air Force!



Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Steven Becker

Army Col. Nicholas Zoeller, 13th Corps Support Command G-5 commander, thanks about 25 members of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing during a ceremony Dec. 3 inside Town Hall. The group, who had volunteered their own personal time to help the local Iraqi community through humanitarian efforts the past few months, were presented certificates of appreciation from the colonel. He also highlighted many of their accomplishments and thanked them for helping to develop a deeper working relationship between the Americans and the Iraqis.

BLOWN AWAY

EOD flight plays key role in Balad mission

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

332nd AEW/PA

"Attention on the net, this is Panther, alarm red is in effect."

When that call goes out from the command post, Balad personnel don their protective gear and take cover. It's then up to the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal flight to get the mission back on track.

Once alarm red is called the EOD flight hits high gear and responds to the point of impact. They must decide if the munition fully detonated or if it needs to be disarmed or destroyed.

"We get to do here what we've actually been trained to do," said Chief Master Sergeant Mike Bernard, EOD flight chief. "From rocket attacks, to mortar attacks to roadside (improvised explosive devices) to vehicle born IEDs, that's what we get here."

Because of the base's location in the Sunni triangle, they're some of the busiest troops on base.

"We do a lot of stuff here that a lot of EOD people don't get the chance to do," said Master Sgt. Justin Anderson, EOD chief of flight operations. "We get a lot of business."

Not only does the flight respond to on base attacks, they also work with the Army to go "outside the wire" for IEDs and VBIEDS.

"You get a great feeling going outside the wire rendering safe extremely dangerous items that were designed to kill or hurt coalition forces and the locals," Sergeant Anderson said. "After we've safely removed those hazards we know that we've saved lives."

It's this opportunity to help others that draw many of the EOD technicians into the career field.

"I think that's why each one of us joined this job," said Senior Airman Ryan



Senior Airman Aaron Johns places a plastic explosive charge under a barrel of contaminated aviation fuel.

McClary, an EOD technician. "What we do on a daily basis is help everyone around us."

"We went out on a call one time where a rocket was launched towards the base but came up short and landed in an Iraqi's backyard," said Senior Airman Melanie Russian, an EOD technician. "We were able to (take care of it) and it was a great feeling knowing that we were there to help."

Not only are the EOD personnel helping base personnel and the locals, the junior ranking technicians are gaining experience that will help them the rest of their careers.

"With the type of experience they are getting here, no amount of training could give them that," Chief Bernard said. "We're creating some of the best EOD techs in the world, and that will serve the Air Force well for years to come."

Regardless of military service, all EOD technicians attend the same school. That background helps them when they're working in a joint environment here.

"We enjoy the opportunity to work together with the Air Force," said Army Staff Sgt. Brian Bradley, who is a member of the 716th Ordnance Company. "It's great



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Brunick, 716th Ordnance Company, left, arranges munition items set for disposal as Staff Sgt. Michael Sablosky, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal flight, places C-4 explosive blocks on aircraft flares.

to have them here."

Often times the Army will call in the Air Force and vice versa when dealing with an IED or unexploded ordnance.

"It's a great joint relationship because maybe they have some experiences that we don't have," Staff Sgt. Bradley said. "Also, we can share some knowledge with them."

"Even though we all come from the same lineage, we all bring a little something different to the job," Sergeant Anderson said. "But, EOD techs are a tight-knit group."

So as the call goes out, "attention on the net, this is Panther, all clear, all clear, all clear," and the mission carries on, we know EOD has done their job, and done it well.

"This is what we live for," Chief Bernard said. "It doesn't get much better than this right here."



Iraqi pilot gets F-16 tour

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

332nd AEW/PA

During the first Gulf War Salam Shalaam flew MiG 23s as a member of Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Air Force.

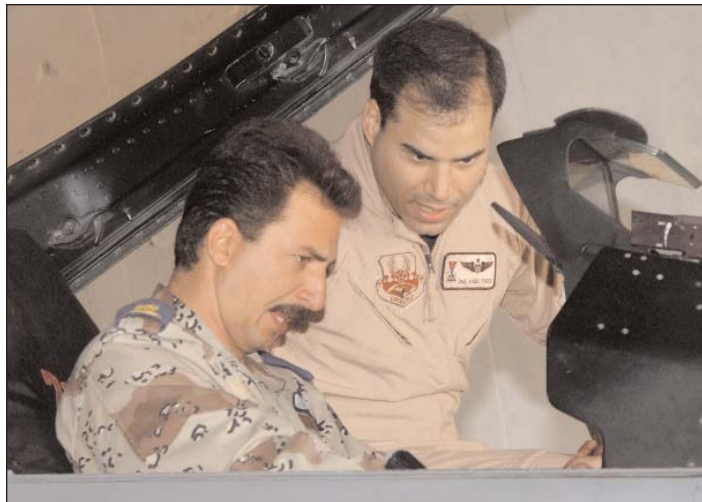
During one mission, Shalaam was ordered to fly his MiG to Iran, where it would be safe from the United States Air Force's far reaching hand. However, Shalaam never made it to his final destination.

While in route to Iran he engaged in a dogfight with two American fighter jets. Shalaam, who was an experienced pilot, tried in vain to lose the two jets. He moved and maneuvered and thought he lost one of his two pursuers. Just as he began to work on losing the second aircraft, it became very clear to him he had not lost either jet.

"They had tricked me," Shalaam said. "I saw only one, but the other one came around and they had me. One of the pilots told me, 'eject or you will be dead.'"

Shalaam took the smart route and ejected safely. That was the last time he saw an American fighter jet up close and personal. That is, until Dec. 7, when as a member of the free Iraqi Air Force, the now Maj. Shalaam got another personal glimpse of a fighter jet, the F-16 *Fighting Falcon*. However, this time it was not in pursuit of him, but safely tucked inside a shelter at Balad Air Base, Iraq.

"This is a like a dream come true for me," Major Shalaam said, through an interpreter, Army Spc. Sief Lincoln. "It's always been a dream for me to go out and see the F-16s and meet American pilots."



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

Iraqi Air Force Maj. Salam Shalaam discusses the cockpit layout of an F-16 *Fighting Falcon* with Maj. Jose Pinedo, 421st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

Major Shalaam is a liaison between the Iraqi Multi-National Force and the American's here. In his 18 year Air Force career, he has logged 845 hours of flying and longs for the day he can fly again.

"Right now all the Iraqi Air Force has is helicopters," Major Shalaam said. "Our main goal is reconstruction, but I will fly again someday, most definitely."

Major Shalaam started his tour at the 421st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron where he was shown how day-to-day flying operations work.

"I was very impressed by the interest he took," Maj. Jose Pinedo, who is an F-16 pilot and the assistant director of operations with the 421st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. "I never thought I'd be giving a tour ... on Iraqi soil, to an Iraqi pilot who was shot down by a U.S. plane."

The major was then taken out to a shelter for a tour of the F-16s. With the rumbling sound of jets taking off in the background

ent countries with entirely different backgrounds, the pilots appeared to have a camaraderie about them that all could sense.

"Military pilots of different nationalities share bonds that transcend political boundaries," Major Pinedo said. "Their love of flying, sense of duty and adventure, provide some of the common ground that brings them together."

"Fighter pilots really love their job," said Col. Paul Avella, who is an F-16 pilot and the deputy commander of the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group. "It is a job of intense self-satisfaction and enrichment. This in turn leads to a self-assuredness that enables one to be very open with a peer."

"That is just the nature of pilots," Major Shalaam said. "We have a respect for each other."

After his second encounter with an fighter jet, Major Shalaam once again walked away. This time he was smiling and thanked everyone not only for the tour, but for freeing his country from a ruthless dictator.

"On behalf of the free Iraqi people, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart," Major Salam said, holding his hand on his heart. "Thank you for coming over here, risking your own blood, and freeing us."

In January Major Shalaam will be promoted to lieutenant colonel. He said he looks forward to Iraq and the United States continuing to work together towards peace.

"Thank you so much for bringing peace to my country," Major Shalaam said. "I look forward to working with you in the future."



Maj. Pinedo shows Maj. Shalaam life support equipment.

and the smell of JP-8 fuel in the air, he met with pilots and reminisced about his flying days.

"Even though it's been four years since I've flown, today brought back many great memories," he said. "I can't wait to fly again."

As he sat in the cockpit of the F-16, it seemed like Major Shalaam was right at home. Although they were from differ-

WAR CHILD

One man's experience growing up among the Tuskegee Airmen

A. Joseph Muniz

AFOSI EDET 2411

With the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing stationed here at Balad Air Base, from time to time some military personnel encounter Iraqi children that are fascinated with our existence in the local area.

Little boys and girls marvel at the organization and equipment that "The Americans" have brought with them. They are also equally excited when they have the chance to meet the men and women in uniform because they know that many of them bring treats and presents. Everything from candy to toys and even school supplies that easily win over their young hearts.

That excitement has not changed since World War II when the Tuskegee Airmen established one of their many Air Fields in Italy after that country had surrendered to the allies. This is the story of one little boy who had befriended them during their stay.

Little Adolfo Caso was a 10 year-old boy when his home country of Italy found itself on the wrong side of World War II. Living just outside of Naples, he lived with his mother and her family waiting to join his father, who had immigrated to the United States before the war had started. Travel was restricted because of the war, so they had to remain in Italy until after the war ended.

Adolfo remembers his country being bombed by American forces due to their allegiance to Adolph Hilter and Nazi Germany. One bombing he remembers specifically happened right over his community when he witnessed American



Courtesy photo

Adolfo Caso stands next to Tech. Sgt. George Watson, who was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, near his home outside Naples, Italy. Caso later immigrated to the United States and became a member of the Army.

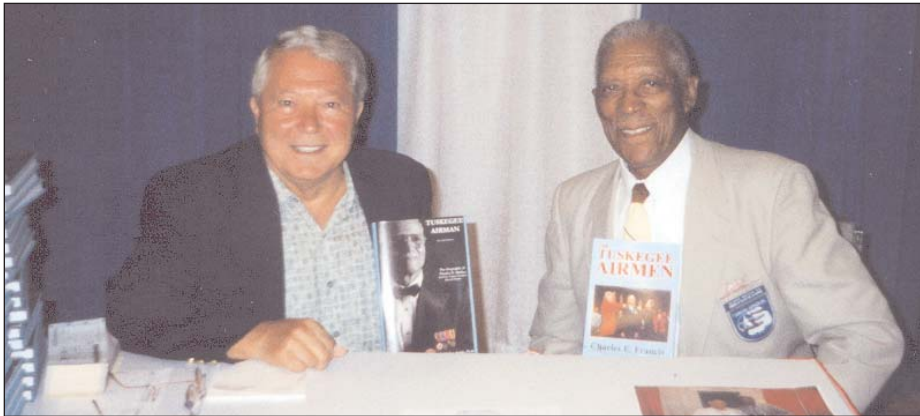
Tuskegee Airmen Timeline

1939 • Missouri senator Harry S. Truman helps sponsor a bill to allow black pilots to serve in the Civilian Pilot Training Program. This allowed black Americans to be trained in aerial combat.

1940 • The Army Air Corps submits a plan to the war department for an "experiment," forming an all-black fighter squadron with thirty-three pilots.

1941 • The 99th Pursuit Squadron is formed by the War Department to be trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Ala.

1942 • The first class of Tuskegee pilots graduate and earn their wings.



Courtesy photo

Caso sits next to Watson during a book signing for “The Tuskegee Airmen.” Caso is now a publishing editor for the company that publishes the book and often travels with the World War II veterans.

bomber planes traveling in formation and being escorted by smaller fighter aircraft—that were fighting off the German and Italian interceptors. Even at his young age, Adolfo recalls that the Germans could not get near the bombers because of the skillful positioning of the American fighters.

Unfortunately, it was not the American soldiers that young Adolfo got to meet first, but the advancing German Army. When the Germans were advancing south to what would be known as the Invasion of Salerno, the first invasion of mainland Italy, tanks ran through the village for almost two weeks on their way to meet up with the enemy. At the same time, American planes were heading northward to fight German forces and to interrupt supply lines.

As the war progressed, Adolfo remembers seeing a small fraction of the same German soldiers retreating through the village, but not stopping.

When Italy surrendered and German soldiers were still fighting their way throughout the country, Adolfo recalls that the Germans were very strict and businesslike. They did not speak to anyone, especially the children in the area. They

never mingled with anyone in the area and would show little or no expression. On one occasion, a small group of fleeing German soldiers had manhandled Adolfo’s uncle, who owned a small shop, and had taken a number of food items. Thankfully, these soldiers left a list of what they had taken before they left. This documentation was later used by Adolfo’s uncle as proof that the items were taken by the Germans so he would not have to pay taxes on them.

When the German Army was slowly retreating and the American forces moved in, they could see a vast difference in standards and how different each military force was. When the American soldiers arrived, they were so friendly and mingled and talked to everyone including the children.

Adolfo recalls that at times, the Tuskegee Airmen would visit their community for some recreation. They stood out to the entire community because up until that time, no one had ever seen black people, let alone American soldiers.

“They would come to town and give us candy,” he said. “It was the first time in my life that I had chewing gum. They did not tell me that I was not supposed to eat

it, which I did and it made me sick.

“I also had my picture taken with so many of them that I don’t recall who was who,” he continued.

Adolfo stated they were near starvation, so the American forces brought them food, which might have saved a lot of lives. The general feeling at the time was that they were glad the Germans were losing the war because they had been denied freedom for so long and that it opened up a whole new world to the country.

In 1947, Adolfo and his family were permitted to immigrate to the United States to join his father. Because his father had already become a naturalized American before Adolfo was born, he got to enjoy dual citizenship, even though he did not know how to speak English.

He and his family settled in Boston, which Adolfo would call home for a majority of his life. He enrolled into the sixth grade despite the fact that he did not speak English, but learned quickly because of the exposure. After high school, Adolfo attended Northeastern University and was commissioned into the United States Army after graduation.

Because of his background, he was stationed in Italy only 10 short years after he left that country to work reconnaissance missions and as a translator.

When Adolfo left active service, he became the director of languages for the public school system outside of Boston, a position he would hold for 20 years.

In 1982, he became a publishing editor for Branden Books. He found out that years earlier, his company had published a book entitled, “The Tuskegee Airmen,” which was about that group of men that he had befriended as a youth in Italy.

He has since become a member of the Tuskegee Airmen Inc., and often travels with some of the original veterans of World War II to promote his company’s book and to speak on their behalf.

Tuskegee Airmen Timeline

1943 • The 99th Pursuit Squadron heads to North Africa. On July 2, Capt. Charles B. Hall is the first Tuskegee pilot to down an enemy aircraft.

1943 • Lt. Col. Benjamin Davis, Jr., leaves the 99th to command the 332nd Fighter Group, which is made up of the 100th, 301st and 302nd all black fighter squadrons.

1944 • The 332nd arrive in Italy. They participate in the invasion of Southern France by escorting bombers and on ground attack missions in Romania and Czechoslovakia.

1945 • World War II ends with the surrender of Japan. Four pilots of the 332nd are awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Who's Your Wingman?

Col. Teresa Dicks

332nd EMXG commander

Sometimes things you do are so transparent you take them for granted. You see yourself as a minor player on the stage of life and wonder "what difference can one person make?" As you approach this holiday season away from your family, friends, and loved ones, you might give in to the temptation to minimize your impact here and in other people's lives. Before you do that, I want to share my idea of the Wingman concept and tell you a story. Please consider this as you make the choice today which path you will follow.

The Wingman concept means many things and includes both being a wingman and having a wingman. It applies from the lowest levels of the flightline and frontline to the highest level of strategic policy. Used wisely, it can provide you both inspiration and motivation for now and in the future.

First, you have to believe in the concept on a personal level. This is a two-fold commitment. You commit to being a wingman for someone else, and you acknowledge your ability to need and have a wingman of your own. This personal level commitment is like two feathers on the same wing of any bird. You "fit" together and work as a team, providing lift and building to a greater whole.

Individually, you have great power, like the pen used by Thomas Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence. But great, silent strength grows from the pairing of two feathers working in concert on any single objective, like flight.

At a higher level, two birds, or two planes, with similar needs and objectives fly in offset formation. For birds, this "formation" flying provides each time to alternate the lead and trail position, drafting off each other for periods of strength and rest, increasing distance and endurance.

For people, this same concept applies. Perhaps the greatest honor or gift you can bestow on someone is to "select" them, one from many, to be your wingman. What a privilege, like being selected to be on an exclusive team. The difference you can make in someone's life can be profound beyond your imagination, like being in exactly the right place at exactly the right time, when they need you most.

Every day you have to make choices. You choose to do a great job or just get by. You choose to get to know someone even when it makes you uncomfortable, or you wait for someone to get to know you.

These choices and the consequences of those decisions define who we are as human beings. Our actions have a direct bearing on how other people view us and how we view ourselves. When I am down and out, that feeling is often cured by looking outside of myself to help someone else. When you feel most empty, if you pour whatever drops of energy you have left into someone else, you end up getting filled back up instead.

Many of you made the choice to get actively involved here, making it a better place to live, work and play. You overcame your fears and volunteered at the CASF, learning first hand the concepts of sacrifice, honor, patriotism, humility, and strength. As my Chief often says, "you go to the CASF thinking you are going to help someone and you end up getting helped instead."

Every day, you accomplish your mission, building on the Tuskegee traditions. You grow in stature, knowledge, maturity and honor. You can do this alone, or you can widen the aperture of your lens and look to those around you. Some may need your help desperately to see the "half full" opportunities that grow around them. Some may have just the wisdom you need at a low point in your life, if only you will let them help you.

At the strategic level, your collective efforts of Viper, Predator, Pave Hawk helicopters and every single support position that provides the foundation and strength for this marathon, provide "top cover" for the Iraqi people. Your purpose and determination is the security blanket allowing the first baby steps of democracy to unfold before your very eyes. Every time is the right time to fight for freedom. No other nation on this earth has the history or Herculean power necessary to stay this course. You are all part of the strategic Wingmen for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

And now, a quick story about someone who was my wingman. In early Sept. 2001, I sat in a classroom at National War College beside a man named Larry Pruitt. Larry was a lieutenant colonel in the Army and a gifted athlete. While attending West Point, he was inducted into the prestigious "100 Yard Club"

hall of fame for his performance as a player.

Larry noticed I wasn't the brightest penny in the athlete pile. Yet, he deliberately sought me out to patiently pitch me softballs until I improved my batting average. As I ran around the parade field at Fort McNair, he would high-five me on the turns with encouraging words. Every day, I improved under his attention. Very early in that friendship, he shared a poem with me you will find below.

On Sept. 11, I sat beside Larry watching the television screen in horror. You all remember where you were and who you were with that day as well. While etched in my memory, I also remember the quiet strength and steely determination displayed by Larry and others. Sadly, about a month after that, Larry died from catastrophic heart failure on the soccer field at Fort McNair.

But Larry left a gift of leadership and nurturing that will endure in every life he touched. Here is that gift captured in one of my wingman's favorite poems.

Touched Shoulders

Did you know you were brave, did you know you were strong?

Did you know there was one leaning hard?

*Did you know that I waited and listened and prayed,
And was cheered by your simplest word?*

*Did you know that I longed for that smile on your face,
For the sound of your voice ringing true?*

*Did you know I grew stronger and better because I
had merely touched shoulders with you?*

I am glad that I live, that I battle and strive

For the place that I know I must fill;

*I am thankful for sorrows, I'll meet with a grin
What fortune may send, good or ill.*

I may not have wealth, I may not be great,

But I know I shall always be true,

*For I have in my life that courage you gave
When once I rubbed shoulders with you.*

As you proceed today, consider your choices well. Hold a steady course with true headings. No matter what storms or headwinds you face, with your personal wingman, and by being a good wingman to someone else, you can succeed. Even if you fall, or fail, they will be there to pick you up, dust you off, and give you the courage to try again. You will emerge from these trials like tempered steel, stronger for having been stretched in the flames of combat, and true to your code and honor. Warriors, Airmen, Wingmen.

Defense briefs

Recruiting focuses on select career fields

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. (AFPN) – The Air Force continues to recruit high quality people while using force-shaping efforts to keep people in critical career fields, the Air Force Recruiting Service commander said during a recent visit here.

Brig. Gen. Robertus C.N. Remkes said the Air Force is striving to “balance the books” by moving people from overmanned Air Force specialties and filling vacancies in traditionally hard-to-fill jobs.

“What we’re doing is focusing on 58 (career fields) that are critical and we know are undermanned,” said General Remkes.

To get those top-notch recruits, the Air Force launched a new advertising campaign to heighten awareness and let the nation know the service needs people with good skills and outstanding character.

“We want young Americans in high school to be aware that there is an Air Force looking for them to ‘cross into the blue,’” the general said.

Recruiting has changed immensely since he graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1977, General Remkes said. Back then, recruiters’ tools were limited, he said. Today, recruiting has to keep up with competition.

“Today, we have to compete with (cable TV) to get a kid’s attention. We also have to compete with kids’ time in school and sports,” the general said.

However, recruiting does not end with commercials and recruiters.

“(Airmen) have an obligation to tell the Air Force story,” he said. “A lot of their neighbors might not know they are in the Air Force. It gives young kids a chance to understand ‘gee what great people they are and what brought you to the Air Force or how can I join.’”

Drug testing increased for troops in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (AFPN) – The Defense Department has increased drug testing for troops stationed in U.S. Central Command’s area of operations, DOD officials said Dec. 10.

Mary Beth Long, deputy assistant defense secretary for counternarcotics, said the services have already increased the number of urine tests given in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The testing is especially needed in Afghanistan, officials said, where the “poppy problem” was even a portion of President Hamid Karzai’s inauguration speech.

“One of the lessons that we have learned from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is that those troops went back to Russia with a drug problem,” Ms. Long said. “Our forces are obviously very, very different. We certainly have no expectation that they would suffer the same kind of issues.”

But troops are under increased stress, officials said, and the availability of a potent drug like opium or heroin could be a temptation. DOD officials said they do not want a repeat of experiences during the Vietnam War, when some servicemembers came home from that conflict addicted to drugs.

Ms. Long said there is very little drug use in the military, and that those “very few” who use illegal drugs abuse marijuana. Drug testing will continue to be an important part of the demand-reduction effort in the department.

Meet your neighbor



Tech. Sgt. Steven Becker

Home station: Ramstein Air Base, Germany

Unit: 332nd EMXG

Family: Brother and sister in New Jersey and a wife and kids in England.

Hobbies: Snow skiing, golf and cooking

How do you contribute to the mission? In short we try to make sure the aircraft maintainers get what they need to repair aircraft (fuel, weather reports, outside agency help, etc.) and report what they are doing to leadership so they can track trends and use information in mission planning.

What is your favorite aspect of this deployment? Meeting a great bunch of people while volunteering in various things across the base. Getting to learn and do stuff outside of my normal duty requirements.

Besides your family, what do you miss back home? I haven’t been stationed in the states since 1998. I mostly miss New York City at Christmas, the boardwalk (Jersey shore) in the summer, the food and go-go bars.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM THE 332ND ECES FIRE DEPARTMENT



SMOKING AREA



NO SMOKING AREA

Air Force Religious Schedule

Protestant

Sundays:

8 a.m. • Religious Education – H-6 Chapel
9 a.m. • Contemporary Worship – H-6 Chapel
10:30 a.m. • Traditional – Hospital
2 p.m. • Bible Study – Hospital
3 p.m. • Devotional – CSAR Theatre
5:30 p.m. • Inspirational Worship – T-Town Chapel

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays:

8:45 a.m. • Purpose Driven Life Study – CASF

Daily:

8:30 p.m. • Band of Brothers – H-6 Chapel
9 p.m. • Prayer – H-6 Chapel

Islamic

Fridays:

1:30 p.m. • Prayer – Provider Chapel

Church of Christ

Sundays:

11 a.m. • Worship – 1/142nd Chapel Tent

Lutheran

Sundays:

8:30 a.m. • Cherokee Chapel
2 p.m. • 185th Task Force Tent

Roman Catholic

Sundays:

10:30 a.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel

Wednesdays:

9:30 a.m. • Mass – CASF

Fridays:

6 p.m. • Reconciliation – Hospital
6:30 p.m. • Mass – Hospital

Latter Day Saints

Sundays:

7 p.m. • Sacraments – H-6 Chapel
8 p.m. • Sunday School – H-6 Chapel

Thursdays:

7 p.m. • Study Group – H-6 Chapel

Jewish

Fridays:

6:30 p.m. • Prayer – Eden Chapel

Orthodox

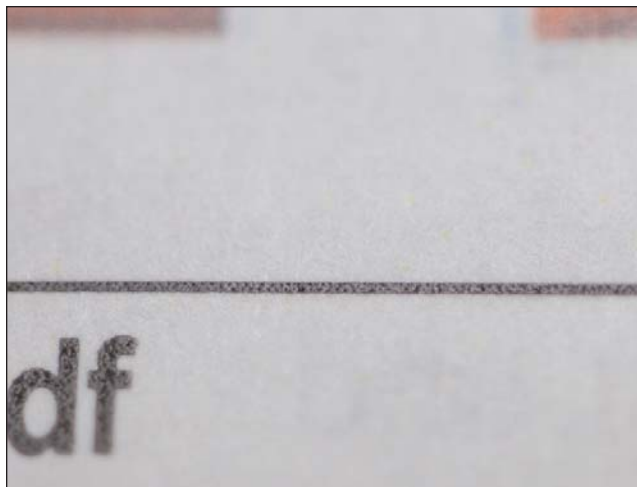
Sundays:

11 a.m. • Divine Liturgy – 185th Task Force Tent

Saturdays:

7 p.m. • Vespers – 185th Task Force Tent

Know what this is?



Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Marc Barnes

If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil. The first person with the correct answer wins a \$5 gift certificate courtesy of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. Last week's photo of strapping inside a kevlar helmet was identified by Tech. Sgt. Gary Walters, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group.

Sustainer Movie Schedule



Schedule is subject to change

Today	6 p.m. - Sharks Tale	Snickets
3 p.m. - Ocean's 12	9 p.m. - Friday	9 p.m. - Ocean's 12
6 p.m. - Lemony Snickets	Night Lights	
9 p.m. - Ocean's 12	Monday	Wednesday
	3 p.m. - Resident Evil	3 p.m. - Wimbledon
Saturday	6 p.m. - Friday	6 p.m. - Sharks Tale
3 p.m. - Taxi	Night Lights	9 p.m. - Taxi
6 p.m. - Ocean's 12	9 p.m. - Taxi	
9 p.m. - Lemony Snickets	Tuesday	Thursday
	3 p.m. - Bourne Supremacy	3 p.m. - Friday
Sunday	6 p.m. - Lemony	Night Lights
3 p.m. - Napoleon Dynamite		6 p.m. - Lemony Snickets
		9 p.m. - Ocean's 12



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Maj. Adriane Craig

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Master Sgt. Dave Reagan

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Red Tail Flyer Editor

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All photos are Air Force photos, unless otherwise indicated.

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